

Module 5B: Student Learning – High School

Welcome to module 5B, student learning in high school. In this module, you'll learn about:

- High Quality Teaching and Learning,
- Graduation Rates, and
- Student Intellectual Engagement.

High Quality Teaching and Learning

The high school student learning goals fall under the high-quality teaching and learning aspiration of Good Spirit School Division. High school teachers in Good Spirit promote this aspiration by:

- implementing provincial curricula and related resources that are developmentally appropriate and culturally responsive,
- employing inquiry-based learning experiences that support a sense of personal competency, self-efficacy, and social responsibility, and
- providing a wide range of opportunities to learn, practice, experience and demonstrate understanding, confidence, and motivation for a healthy and balanced life.

The goals that directly affect student learning in the high schools are:

- by June 30th the three-year and five-year graduation rate will increase by 2% as compared to the data from the previous year,
- by June 30th the three-year and five-year graduation rate for self-declared Indigenous students will increase by 5% as compared to the data from the previous year, and
- by June 30th students in Grades 7 to 12 will report a 2% increase in student intellectual engagement as compared to the data from the previous year.

Graduation Rate Goals

The first two goals relate to graduation rates. They focus on:

- increasing the three-year and five-year graduation rate by 2% and
- increasing the three-year and five-year graduation rate for self-declared Indigenous students by 5%.

Goal Evaluation

The data for the graduation rate goals is pulled from the Ministry of Education's My School Sask or MSS program.

Division and School-Based Strategies

Schools are implementing a number of different strategies to increase the graduation rates of students in Good Spirit School Division. These strategies include:

- the creation of Alliances for Gender and Sexual Diversity,
- the allocation of grad teams to assist with career education and planning,
- the use of apprenticeship credits,
- credit extension options which include 4 -and 5-year plans to complete high school,
- a credit recovery option,
- digital learning school,
- high school final assessments,
- locally developed courses,
- myBluePrint, and
- the opportunity to pursue special project credits.

In addition, the division has implemented a number of strategies to specifically address the second graduation goal which is to increase the three-year and five-year graduation rate for self-declared Indigenous students. These strategies include:

- Indigenous Community Workers,
- Indigenous Student Success Leads, and
- the Indigenous Studies 10 course.

Let's take a look at a few of these strategies a little closer.

Career Education and Planning

High schools support students with career and post-secondary planning through the allocation of grad teams. Each high school is allocated time for graduation coaching to support students with developing and achieving their graduation and post-graduation plans.

Students have the opportunity to begin a career in the trades:

- through various practical & applied arts course offerings,
- by considering time spent working in a trade for high school credit to be considered as time worked in a trade as an apprentice,
- through work study programs, and
- by offering specialized courses such as the Agriculture Equipment and Parts Technician.

Good Spirit School Division is also an affiliate member of the *Regina District Industry Education Council* which connects students with post-secondary opportunities in various sectors through career fairs, career spotlights, presentations about post-secondary funding options, and more.

Indigenous Community Workers and Indigenous Student Success Leads

Currently 6 schools within the Good Spirit School Division have Indigenous Community Workers (ICWs), Indigenous Student Success Leads (ISSLs) or both. Whether or not a school is allocated a position depends on the self-declared Indigenous population of the school. These positions are created specifically to support Indigenous students through increased mentorship, support, and guidance focused on Indigenous perspectives and ways of knowing.

ICWs and ISSLs support Indigenous students and their families in a variety of ways. They:

- hold “Meet and Mentor” meetings with Indigenous students to check on their classes, credits, future goals, and plans,
- build stronger connections with families,
- help to liaise between the school, staff, and families,
- provide referrals to school and community resources,
- advocate for students and families, when necessary,
- provide academic support,
- aid in the access to nutrition programs, school-based pantries, and community food resources, as necessary, and
- support schools with cultural and family engagement events.

Indigenous Studies 10

Good Spirit School Division is responding to the Truth and Reconciliation calls to action by making the Indigenous Studies 10 course a mandatory course for all students. The purpose of this course is to help ensure all students have a more positive outlook on Indigenous people and develop a better understanding of pre-contact life, Indigenous culture, and our shared history.

Our world is changing and it is imperative that all of our students are educated about Indigenous people in the past and the contemporary contributions of Indigenous people today.

Locally Developed Courses

Locally developed courses of study are created by school divisions and are approved by the Ministry of Education. These courses are developed in response to the specific needs, interests, and abilities of students in a school division and contain learning outcomes that are not already found in provincially developed curricula.

School divisions apply to the Ministry of Education to create a new locally developed course or to offer a course that has been developed by another Saskatchewan school division.

The high schools in Good Spirit offer a wide variety of locally developed courses. Some topics include hockey officiating, mental health and wellbeing, musical theatre, and post-secondary readiness.

myBlueprint

myBlueprint is an online planning tool for students and their families. It is a digital portfolio as well as an education and career/life planning resource that can assist students in developing individualized graduation and post-graduation plans.

All Grade 7 to 12 students in Saskatchewan are provided with a *myBlueprint* account through the Ministry of Education. Students can connect caregivers to their account as well.

myBlueprint includes “Who Am I” assessments and job-specific compatibility surveys that help students discover their learning and personality styles, interests, desired knowledge, and motivation factors. This information connects them with future career possibilities.

It also includes the ability to search, filter, and compare local, provincial, and national information about apprenticeships, colleges, universities, and occupations to inform students’ decision-making and preparations for the future.

Finally, *myBlueprint* includes an online, interactive portfolio where students can keep track of important experiences, activities, achievements, and skills with documents, images, and videos. Students can then easily share an interactive portfolio link with others, generate resumes and cover letters, and more.

Questions To Ask

To find out more about your school and what they are doing to increase their graduation rates, ask the following questions:

- What locally developed courses do you offer?
- What is the process for students to access a special project credit?
- What is credit extension?
- What is credit recovery?
- How do grad coaches support student learning?
- Do students need to write final exams in all subjects?
- How can students earn apprenticeship hours while still in school?
- What specific strategies have you implemented for Indigenous students?
- Have you noticed an increase in the graduation rate of students since implementing the strategies in the division’s strategic plan?

SCC Action Plan Ideas

SCC action plan ideas include:

1. hosting a parent institute to unpack some of the high school strategies such as the special project credit,
2. promoting and supporting the use of *myBlueprint*,
3. attending treaty days held at the school, and
4. developing relationships with neighbouring First Nations and recruiting new SCC members.

Student Intellectual Engagement Goal

The student intellectual engagement goal states, “By June 30th students in Grades 7 to 12 will report a 2% increase in student intellectual engagement as compared to the data from the previous year.”

Goal Evaluation

This goal is assessed using data from Our School Survey. Our School Survey gathers information on a variety of factors that affect student learning and wellbeing.

Division and School-Based Strategies

The schools in Good Spirit use a variety of strategies to promote the intellectual engagement of their students. Strategies include:

- blended learning,
- credit extension,
- credit recovery,
- increasing student engagement in writing,
- library collection kits,
- outdoor learning spaces,
- thinking classrooms,
- special project credits,
- student choice, and
- student directed studies.

Let’s look at a few of these strategies in more detail.

Blended Learning

Blended learning is the use of both traditional classroom teaching methods and online learning experiences in a face-to-face classroom. In a quality blended learning classroom, the content, and activities of both the in-person and online learning are integrated with one another and collectively they work toward meeting the same learning goals.

Blended learning results in:

- increased student autonomy,
- improved learning outcomes,
- greater opportunities for collaborative learning,
- improved accessibility to course content, and
- increased use of digital assessment tools such as Padlet, Flip, and virtual labs.

Credit Recovery and Credit Extension

The purpose of Credit Recovery and Credit Extension is to ensure that students obtain the requirements they need to graduate from high school. Credit Recovery is an intervention that allows a student to “recover” a credit for a 10, 20 or 30 level class that they had not successfully completed. Credit Extension is an intervention that extends the time a student needs to achieve a credit in a 10, 20, or 30 level class.

Both these strategies allow students to demonstrate that they have achieved curriculum learning outcomes. Credit is given for the achievement of the outcomes they complete.

These interventions are based on meeting the needs of individual students and will vary in approach.

Increasing Student Engagement in Writing

Good Spirit wants to increase student engagement in writing in order to support the writing development of their students. Research demonstrates that students need multiple opportunities to make decisions during the writing process so they can engage in critical thinking when they are writing.

Currently, teachers are focusing their instruction on the *4 Essential Studies* by Penny Kittle and Kelly Gallagher who identify four strategies that teachers can use to increase student engagement in their writing. These strategies include:

- teaching writing an essay as an art form,
- creating book clubs,
- exploring the potential of the unexpected through poetry, and

- using digital composition to cross genre boundaries.

Library Collection Kits

Each library collection kit is a set of resources curated around an outcome or theme that teachers can sign-out and use in their classrooms.

The primary objective in the selection of materials for the kits is for students to have access to materials that are equitable in their representation of:

- age,
- ability,
- culture,
- gender,
- socioeconomic status,
- religion,
- occupation, and
- sexual orientation.

With teacher collaboration, Good Spirit has developed several collection kits to support teachers in achieving this objective.

Special Project Credits

Special project credits are a way for students to earn credits toward their graduation requirements for out-of-school initiatives. Students can earn up to three credits at either the 10, 20 or 30 level. The projects are chosen and designed by each individual student and developed with the support and supervision of a teacher. Each project requires 100 hours of work and a presentation of learning at the end.

Student Choice

Research has shown that when students are given a choice in their learning, they are more engaged. Teachers build student choice into their lessons. For example, teachers can give students a choice in the novels they read during ELA. Teachers can find 4 or 5 different choices of novels that center on the outcome or theme being studied. Students can then choose which novel they want to read.

Another example of how teachers can provide student choice is letting students decide how they want to be assessed on their understanding of an outcome. Options might include a paper and pencil quiz, a demonstration, or a video presentation.

Student Directed Studies

Student directed studies provide students with the opportunity to create and carry out a plan to explore one or more topics of personal interest that are relevant to the course they are studying. Teachers serve as the facilitator and guide students through these independent studies.

For example, in a Health Science class, a student may design a scientific investigation that relates to a current area of study. The student comes up with a testable question, a hypothesis, an experimental design that will test the hypothesis, and detailed procedures for collecting and analyzing the data.

Questions To Ask

Questions to ask your teachers and the principal to find out more about the intellectual engagement of students include:

- What does blended learning look like in a high school classroom?
- Why is student choice important?
- How are students provided with choice in their classes?
- What are student directed studies?
- How are English Language Arts teaching trying to make writing more engaging for their students?

SCC Action Plan Ideas

Possible SCC action plans include:

1. Participating in one or more learning walks that center on student success. For example, you could go for a learning walk that focuses on:
 - the environment of the school,
 - Math,
 - English Language Arts, or
 - other required or elective classes.
2. Hosting an open house or student showcase event that highlights:
 - practical and applied arts projects,
 - wellness demonstrations,
 - heritage fairs,
 - art demonstrations,
 - science fairs, or
 - any other area that is a focus of your school.

If you have any further questions on student learning in the high school, contact your principal. Thanks for hanging out until the end. I hope you've discovered something new about student learning in your high school.